

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Date of transcription 8-3-92

Doctor CHARLES A. CRENSHAW, M.D., F.A.C.S., date of birth January 11, 1933, 215 North Rivercrest Drive, Fort Worth, Texas, telephone number (817) 927-1171, was interviewed by Special Agents (SA) ANNE HOPKINS and GARY L. GERSZEWSKI, Dallas, regarding Doctor CRENSHAW's involvement in his medical treatment of President JOHN F. KENNEDY on November 22, 1963 and LEE HARVEY OSWALD on November 24, 1963. After being advised of the identity of the interviewing agents and the purpose of the interview, Doctor CRENSHAW provided the following information:

On November 22, 1963, Doctor CRENSHAW was a resident at PARKLAND MEMORIAL HOSPITAL, Dallas, Texas. He was the head of the B Elective Surgery Team; he began work on that day at approximately 8:00 AM. By that point in his medical career Doctor CRENSHAW had been exposed to between two and three hundred gunshot wounds as a result of his work in the emergency/trauma room as well as medical case conferencing.

On November 22, 1963, Doctor CRENSHAW performed a gall bladder operation in the early morning which took approximately two hours. After completing the operation, Doctor CRENSHAW was on the ward going over the charts of other patients when he heard the operator paging Doctor TOM SHIRES "Stat." Doctor SHIRES was Chief of Surgery at PARKLAND MEMORIAL HOSPITAL. Because Doctor CRENSHAW knew that Doctor SHIRES was in Galveston at the time, he (Doctor CRENSHAW) picked up the page and was told by the operator that the President had been shot and that he was coming to the Emergency Room.

Doctor CRENSHAW began running through the surgery area when he observed Doctor ROBERT MCCLELLAND looking at some information on a posting board. Doctor CRENSHAW grabbed Doctor MCCLELLAND and explained the situation to him as they ran down the hall.

By the time Doctors CRENSHAW and MCCLELLAND arrived at Trauma Room number one, the President was already in the room. Also present in the room was Mrs. KENNEDY, Secret Service Agent

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by SA ANNE HOPKINS
SA GARY L. GERSZEWSKI/ze Date dictated 8-3-92

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CLINT HILL, Doctors MALCOLM PERRY, JIM CARRICO, and numerous other medical personnel.

Upon arriving in the room, Doctor CRENSHAW assumed a position near the President's waist. From that position Doctor CRENSHAW had an opportunity to observe a small, round, well demarcated wound measuring approximately three to six millimeters across in the throat of the President. The wound was bubbling, indicating that air was escaping from the hole. From his position, Doctor CRENSHAW had also an opportunity to observe the President's head wound. Doctor CRENSHAW observed as Doctor PERRY made an incision across the neck wound in order to insert the tracheal tube. Doctor CRENSHAW could not estimate the length of the incision performed by Doctor PERRY, but indicated that it was less than the width of the flange on the tracheal tube which is less than one and three quarter inches across. The wound was located in the same position where tracheal tubes are normally inserted.

The head wound was located at the back of the President's head and was the approximate size of Doctor CRENSHAW's fist. It extended from the approximate center of the skull in the back to just behind the right ear, utilizing a left to right orientation and from a position a couple of inches above the right ear to the approximate middle of the right ear utilizing a top to bottom orientation.

After observing the President's wounds from his position near the chest for approximately one minute, Doctor CRENSHAW assumed the position near the right leg in order to perform a cut down on a vein in order to administer fluids to the President. While Doctor CRENSHAW performed this procedure, numerous other doctors were involved in life saving efforts. Doctor CRENSHAW's procedure took approximately six to eight minutes.

After completing the cut down on the President's right leg, Doctor CRENSHAW observed as the rest of the medical staff attempted to save the President's life. When it was finally determined that the President had expired, Doctor CHARLES BAXTER pulled the sheet over the President's head. Doctors BAXTER and CRENSHAW went out to the waiting room outside of the Trauma Room one and observed Mrs. KENNEDY. Shortly thereafter, a Catholic priest arrived in order to perform the last rites on the

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President. Doctor CRENSHAW reentered the trauma room to observe the administration of the rites. Doctor CRENSHAW observed Mrs. KENNEDY approach the dead President and kiss his great toe. Thereafter, she placed her wedding ring on the President's small finger. After the last rites had been performed, Mrs. KENNEDY left the Emergency Room.

Doctor CRENSHAW stood outside the Emergency Room while the President's body was being cleaned. Doctor CRENSHAW stood outside of the room for ten but "no more than twenty minutes."

A bronze colored coffin arrived from O'NEAL's FUNERAL HOME for the President's body. Doctor CRENSHAW observed as the President was placed into the coffin. The coffin which was brought from O'NEAL's FUNERAL HOME appeared to be the same one which was unloaded from AIR FORCE ONE at ANDREW'S AIR FORCE BASE later that night.

Prior to the President's body being placed in the coffin, Doctor CRENSHAW had an opportunity to view the President's head wound. Doctor CRENSHAW had an opportunity to move the head and noted that the wound was located in the right rear of the head and that the cerebellum portion of the brain was exposed. It was at this point that Doctor CRENSHAW placed his fist next to the wound in order to compare the wound's relative size. Though he had physically moved the head and viewed it for several minutes, Doctor CRENSHAW conducted "no real study" of the head other than the obvious wound. Doctor CRENSHAW noted that the face was not marred and that based upon the wound which he observed at the back of the head "the only thing that we can postulate" was that a shot from the side had entered just above the right ear and exploded a portion of the President's head. Doctor CRENSHAW described the wound as a "tangential wound." There was no sign of an entry wound in the skull; Doctor CRENSHAW developed his supposition of a tangential wound based upon his experience.

Doctor CRENSHAW supervised as the body of the President was placed into the coffin. Because of the concern that blood would stain the lining of the coffin, a plastic mattress cover was placed into the coffin prior to the body. Doctor CRENSHAW indicated that this mattress cover may have been confused for a body bag by some of the individuals who had removed the body from the coffin. Doctor CRENSHAW noted that someone from O'Neal's

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closed the head wound prior to placing the body in the casket.

After the coffin had been sealed, six or eight men lined up on either side of the coffin and escorted the body and Mrs. KENNEDY out of the Emergency Room to an awaiting hearse. Doctor EARL ROSE attempted to prohibit the removal of the body because an autopsy had not yet been performed but was told to get out of the way by one of the Secret Service Agents escorting the casket. Doctor ROSE complied, and the body was removed.

On November 24, 1963, Doctor CRENSHAW and several other doctors were in the Doctor's Lounge when the telephone rang. Doctor CRENSHAW, whose Elective Surgery Team B had just ended his shift, answered the phone and was told by the hospital administrator that a free operating team was needed in the Emergency Room immediately. Doctor CRENSHAW and several other doctors responded and upon arrival at the Emergency Room were told by the administrator that OSWALD was coming in. Despite the fact that Trauma Room number one was better equipped, Trauma Room two was prepared for OSWALD's arrival out of deference to President KENNEDY. It was Doctor CRENSHAW who suggested that Trauma Room two be utilized.

Within seven and half minutes of OSWALD's arrival, four cutdowns had been performed, one on each extremity. The cutdowns allowed fluid to be pumped into OSWALD's body. Additionally, a chest tube had been inserted on the right side, and an endotracheal tube had been inserted and oxygen was being administered. From the time OSWALD arrived until the time he expired he was unconscious and never said a word.

After the initial procedures had been completed, OSWALD was carted to Surgery. Doctor THOMAS SHIRES was in charge of the surgical procedures. Approximately twelve minutes after OSWALD had arrived at PARKLAND MEMORIAL HOSPITAL, Doctor PERRY made the initial incision in an effort to repair the damage done by the bullet. Because of the urgency of the situation, OSWALD was operated on the very cart which brought him into the Operating Room.

Doctor CRENSHAW scrubbed in and assisted initially by holding a retractor. Doctor CRENSHAW had someone else hold the "idiot stick" and scrubbed out, but continued to observe the surgery.

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Doctor CRENSHAW then observed an individual with a badge in the operating room who was wearing no mask, no hat, and a scrub suit which was too small for the individual. Doctor CRENSHAW obtained the proper items for the individual and provided them to him. Doctor CRENSHAW was not aware of which law enforcement agency the individual was affiliated with, but assumed that he a law enforcement official. Given the circumstances of the previous days at PARKLAND HOSPITAL, it was not unusual to see law enforcement officers throughout the building. Doctor CRENSHAW noted that the individual was carrying a revolver in the scrub suit pocket.

After providing a hat and mask to the officer, Doctor CRENSHAW was tapped on the shoulder by a nurse whose identity he cannot recall. The nurse advised him that there was a phone call and asked him to take it.

Doctor CRENSHAW picked up the phone and identified himself. The person on the other end of the line stated "This is the President LYNDON B. JOHNSON. How is the accused assassin doing?" Doctor CRENSHAW indicated that he recognized the voice as being that of President JOHNSON, and indicated that he had met JOHNSON years earlier.

When Doctor CRENSHAW advised that OSWALD was holding his own, the person on the other end of the line stated "Would you take a message to the Chief Operating Surgeon?" The individual then stated, "there is a man in the room. I would like him to take a death bed confession." The phone then clicked off before Doctor CRENSHAW could provide any response. Doctor CRENSHAW went back into the operating room and reported the call to Doctor SHIRES who merely looked at him and shook his head. Also present in the operating room at the time were doctors RON JONES, MCCLELLAND, and PERRY. Additionally, there was a crowd of individuals in the operating room observing. Recently, Doctor CRENSHAW has learned that Doctor PHILIP EARL WILLIAMS, an intern at the time, was in the operating room and heard the report Doctor CRENSHAW made to Doctor SHIRES.

Approximately eight to ten minutes later, OSWALD began developing cardiac problems and soon went into ventricular fibrillation as a result of a chemical imbalance. Though various efforts were made to save him, OSWALD ultimately died.

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A doctor whose identity Doctor CRENSHAW could not recall removed the bullet from OSWALD's body and provided it to a Mrs. BELL who in turn turned it over to law enforcement officials.

Recently, Doctor CRENSHAW has received a statement from a Mrs. PHYLLIS BARTLETT (phonetic) who indicated that she was the operator who transferred the call from the person identifying himself as President JOHNSON to the Operating Room. In the statement provided to Doctor CRENSHAW, Mrs. BARTLETT stated that she never made note of the call because she believed it may have been a prank, and that she did not think it was anything unusual. BARTLETT indicated that after initially transferring the call to the operating room, she then directed it to a specially designated section of the hospital setup for handling incoming calls regarding the assassination.

In response to questions regarding some of the events recounted in his book, Doctor CRENSHAW provided the following information:

Doctor CRENSHAW observed an individual strike another with a large gun as he was headed to the Emergency Room to assist in the efforts to save President KENNEDY's life. Doctor CRENSHAW later found out that the altercation was between a Secret Service Agent and a FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION (FBI) agent. The Secret Service Agent carried a "large gun" but Doctor CRENSHAW did not know the exact type. Doctor CRENSHAW indicated that he knew that it was not a "Tommy gun." Doctor CRENSHAW indicated that he had seen Tommy guns in movies and that it was not the type of gun utilized. As a result of the altercation, Doctor CRENSHAW believed that it was possible that the FBI agent had broken his jaw but that he was not sure of that.

Regarding SA CLINT HILL's presence in the Emergency Room, Doctor CRENSHAW indicated that he was "not threatening" and that he had his jacket off because it apparently had been utilized to cover the head of the President during the ride to PARKLAND HOSPITAL. SA HILL's revolver was not cocked and he "just had it in his hand" because he apparently did not know what to do with it. The weapon was held by SA HILL pointing upwards.

In response to questions regarding the origin of the book, CRENSHAW provided the following information:

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Doctor CRENSHAW began writing a journal regarding the events which had taken place at PARKLAND MEMORIAL HOSPITAL on the Saturday following the assassination. He began writing this book in November 1990 in an effort to recount the three days at PARKLAND. When his initial manuscript was presented, Doctor CRENSHAW was told that it was not suitable for publication as a book. Doctor CRENSHAW was then teamed up with JENS HANSEN and GARY SHAW. Together the three authored the book entitled "JFK CONSPIRACY OF SILENCE".

Doctor CRENSHAW would dictate portions of the book to HANSEN and together they would write the text.

The original notes of Doctor CRENSHAW's, which began on the Saturday after the assassination, were in a journal form. The journal was given to HANSEN and may have been destroyed.

Doctor CRENSHAW was motivated not to provide his account because of the "pervasive atmosphere of silence" which surrounded the KENNEDY assassination. After suffering two coronaries, a stroke, and being inflicted with hypertension, Doctor CRENSHAW believes that his career is finished and that he is able to now provide his account of what he saw in 1963.